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**WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP CLUB**

HEC Paris MBA



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**"EVERYONE BENEFITS  
WHEN WOMEN AND GIRLS CAN  
PARTICIPATE FREELY, FULLY,  
AND EQUALLY IN SOCIETY AND  
IT'S ON ALL OF US TO PROMOTE  
THE RIGHTS OF WOMEN AND  
GIRLS, RESPECT THEIR  
VOICES, AND WORK TOGETHER  
TO BUILD A MORE JUST,  
INCLUSIVE WORLD.**

**JUSTIN TRUDEAU - PRIME MINISTER OF CANADA**

# ANDREW VICTOR S19

INTERVIEWED BY SURI YANG

**Hello Andrew! Please tell us about yourself and your partnership with Kristina.**

I am a general hobbyist. I enjoy dabbling in many things and enjoy DIYing any project. I love to garden, brew beer, build furniture, cook, and drink good wine or whiskey. Kristina and I share a love of cooking and drinking wine, which has been a blast as we have often made that a key part of our travels around Europe. We enjoy traveling, especially with one another, because we complement each other so well. Where I am a procrastinator, she's a planner. Where I help her with math, she fixes my papers and resume. We balance each other in a lot of ways and have made each other better over the years because we respect one another enough to listen and consider the other's point of view. I also would never have made it to HEC without her.

**Do you think you are interested in gender equality because of your partnership? Could you share your experience that inspired you?**

I think that my eyes have been opened more because of experiences that Kristina has shared with me, or events that I've observed when I'm around her. I don't think that there was an event that inspired me because I've always had strong women in my life. My mother, grandmother and sister are all strong women with opinions on everything. They've set a great example for me



and Kristina is just another example of a strong woman in my life. For me, gender equality is something that should be the norm and it's crazy that we have to fight against the discrimination, against the misogyny, or out of bounds comments. All the women in my life are examples of why women are just as good (and often) better than men.

**Have you ever felt gender bias towards you? Or indirectly experienced it hearing from your partner? If for you, how did you handle it? Or for your partner how did you handle it?**

I've experienced and witnessed it happening to Kristina. The one that happens often is when we go to speak with someone, often it is Kristina that will start the conversation and more than once, the person we're addressing will turn to me and try to have the conversation with me. I usually will just turn to Kristina and let her respond – still haven't found a great retort yet.



**What do you think is the role of men as allies in gender equality? Do you believe increasing gender equality is a positive change for both genders? For all of us?**

I think increasing equality is best for everyone. When speaking of gender equality, it's pretty obvious to me that no one has it all, no one is perfect so we need different opinions, different emotional reactions and different experiences to come to a better conclusion. Having more variety in sharing their opinions or experience will only help us all become better, but that begins with equality. It begins with giving everyone equal respect.

**How could you support women in this change?**

I do my best to pay attention to what is happening around me, especially in situations with all men. The expectation that "boys will be boys" is quite silly and I think it's important to call out someone when a friend or another male is saying or doing something derogatory towards women. Not only is it a moment to help them realize what they're saying, but also sometimes guys are ignorant about how their attitudes impact women or the men around them. That is really more about what

I can do with guys, but it helps change the culture too.

**In your opinion based on your experience, what are the three main barriers to achieve gender equality?**

Education, passive acceptance, and ignorance. Education because that is where a lot of the differences are accentuated. Boys and girls are treated differently from a young age and so they expect different things from the world. This also leads to growing up and treating people differently. Passive acceptance allows the equality to exist and most people are afraid to say anything because they don't want to be "that guy/gal" or upset anyone. This is something to upset others over because everyone deserves equality. The final one is ignorance. It goes along with the previous two, but a lot of people just don't realize how their actions affect others and don't try to be aware either. They're blissfully ignorant about how they treat others and so the cycle continues. I'm probably guilty of this as well, but with great female role models (including my wife) I try every day to be aware and support the women in my life.

# YOUNES DAOUD J20

INTERVIEWED BY AKANKSHA RASHMI

**Hi, Younes! It's always a pleasure talking to you. To start with, please tell us more about yourself and Youmna.**

Youmna and I are both from the northern part of Morocco – Chefchaouen and Tetouan respectively – and we met in December 2009. Back then, I was studying in Montreal and met her in a family and friends gathering during a trip back to Morocco. Today, we are happily married. She is a Clinical Psychologist and studied in the U.S. and also in Hungary.

**How do you think your partnership shaped your perspective of gender equality? Could you share the experience that inspired you?**

We have always seen each other as equals since the beginning of our relationship. In fact, what we loved about each other at first sight was the total absence of individual gender bias. Youmna does not have a male sibling and was strongly empowered by her parents, who introduced her to feminism at a young age. I recall our first discussions where it happened that we frequently mentioned Fatima El Mernissi – a paramount feminist figure in the Arab world – and Simone de Beauvoir's autobiographic novel "Mémoires d'une jeune fille rangée". A literature discussion is always an efficient trigger of positive insights.



**What do you think is the role of men as allies in gender equality? How is gender equality a positive change for both genders?**

Society is made up from women and men. Both genders are inextricably linked in all aspects of life. I am still shocked on how women's roles in shaping societies have been reduced to a little contribution for ages. In fact, it still is by some retrograde minds. Of course, women should not wait for narrow-minded men to approve gender equality. Sadly, we are still far from the ideal state of the world where the world views women as men's equals, especially in some specific regions of the world. But I believe no happiness is possible if there is no gender equality. Women and men together, hand in hand, will make this world a better place.

**How do you perceive the role of men in overcoming these barriers and creating opportunities for gender equality?**

Men are women's partners in the journey to gender equality. As husbands, men should respect their wives' choices and encourage them to fight for their rights. Also, men should not be afraid of showing their emotions. As fathers, they should empower their daughters, strengthen their resilience, and invest in their education. As professionals, they should have no gender bias in recruitment, training and promotion, and more importantly, promote gender equality in boards and decision-making roles. More generally, as citizens, men should get rid of biased and dark-aged views on gender and read about the history of feminism and women's struggle to own their rights.

**In your opinion based on your experience, what are the three main barriers to achieve gender equality?**

Gender inequality is a sad heritage of an ancient gender role definition. What we are left with now must be overcome by all means. Firstly, we need to start from the micro-level, the family. Children's upbringing has to be gender-neutral in gender perception. We can still hear in some societies with some statements like "do this because you are the man in the family". This has undeniably has an effect on how boys perceive their masculine roles, and the same applies to girls. Secondly, civil society has a role to play to achieve gender equality. Awareness at all levels should be enhanced, but again, the more focused on small communities the better the results will be.

Thirdly, the rule of law. Regulation is very powerful in shaping societies' fate. In my opinion, laws should favor equality, and equal laws for men and women in a situation where men are already favored will never achieve gender equality. Discriminatory regulation (quotas for women employment, laws for equal heritage in countries where it is not applied) is an important instrument to be considered.

*"As citizens, men should get rid of biased and dark-aged views on gender and read about the history of feminism and women's struggle to own their rights."*





# ERWIN BRUDER S20

INTERVIEW BY KRITIKA TANEJA &  
SURI YANG

**Hello Erwin! Thank you for accepting our WIL magazine interview! To begin with, could you tell us about yourself and about your wife?**

My wife is an investment banker, I am an officer in the French Army. It seemed like it was an unobvious match but we both shared a love for an active lifestyle. We both have very demanding work schedule and professional career, and it wasn't easy to combine our lives together, but we made it last for 13 years already! I really value the fact that we committed early in life and hence with the typical mindset of younger people, that is pure feelings, no hidden agenda and faith in the future. We support each other in each step of our lives and we try to make our pledge as a fundamental root of our lives together.

**Do you think being married changes the way you develop as a leader ?**

Definitely. I owe her a lot in this matter. She really made a difference each time I had a leadership role. Her presence alone makes me feel confident in my everyday life. She is my closest advisor. I value the level of understanding she has about my personality. She gives me feedback that no colleagues or even leadership coaches can or dare provide.



She also gives me much more than that: purpose. What we have built together as a long term partner is one of the biggest drive that makes me humane and balanced. When I am away and dealing with critical situations on the battlefield, I never forget it and it is good to know that there is a haven of peace somewhere. Like Ulysses, I think we all need an Ithaca to take wise decisions.

**Have you ever felt gender bias towards you? Or indirectly experienced it hearing from your partner? If for you, how did you handle it? Or for your partner how did you handle it?**

I believe in a way we already experience gender inequality when discussing that topic of women and men in leadership. If you look at history, you mostly hear about men supported by



women: Michele and Barack Obama, Yvonne and Charles de Gaulle. But we rarely talk about Prince Phillip and Queen Elizabeth II! That's gender inequality that is deep-rooted in our society.

At my personal level, I've witnessed it happening to my wife. When she was going through a recruiting process some years ago, she was asked whether she will have a child soon. Since then, we made it a point to prepare for these types of questions during an interview so they do not catch her off guard.

I support her as much as possible and I hope this MBA program will make me understand her working environment in finance better than before. In fact, wanting to know more about my wife's world was also one of my motivations to join the HEC Paris MBA program.

**Based on your experience, what are the main barriers to achieving gender equality?**

In my opinion, part of the problem can be tackled at a very young age. Speaking from a man's point of view, developing a constructive

mindset about gender inequality has a lot to do with the relationships within the family. I like the idea of the Promise at Dawn by Romain Gary. In it, he explains that you experience an absolute form of love from your mother when you are a child and that you will never find it again in your life. This represents a level of respect for human dignity and especially for women. Unfortunately, a lot of people never have the chance to experience that from their mother.

*"If you look at history, you mostly hear about men supported by women: Michele and Barack Obama, Yvonne and Charles de Gaulle. But we rarely talk about Prince Phillip and Queen Elizabeth II!"*



**"WE ALL HAVE SO  
MUCH MORE IN  
COMMON THAN WHAT  
SEPERATES US"**

**KAMALA HARRIS - US VICE PRESIDENT-ELECT**



Picture source: internet

# SANNA MARIN

## THE STORY OF THE FEMINIST PRIME MINISTER OF FINLAND

BY MONICA YUSUF

On 10 December 2019, Sanna Marin became the prime minister of Finland at 34, the youngest prime minister the country has ever had. In August 2020, she was elected chair of the Social Democratic Party of Finland.

She started her political career in the years following her high school graduation when she ran for election to the City Council of Tampere. She was then elected to the Finnish Parliament as an Member of Parliament in 2015. Four years later, on 6 June 2019, she became the Minister of Transport and Communications.

Marin was born in Helsinki, the capital city of Finland in 1985 and grew up in several cities until she settled in Tampere. Following her parents' separation, she was brought up by her mother and her mother's female partner. In an interview given in 2015 to the Finnish weekly magazine *Me Naiset*, she

said that as a child, she felt "invisible" and that she was unable to open up to others about her difference. "It was something that we did not talk about. It was only possible to talk freely enough about rainbow families in the 2000s." This personal experience, she said, "Changed my vision of gender equality, equality in general and human rights."

Almost a year after Marin, with the coalition government headed by four other women, started work, less than one week ago BBC announced her in the list of its 100 Women as one of the most influential and inspirational women around the world in 2020. In separate interview with *Time*, Marin rejected the label as a young, female role model. She advocated that being a role model is related more to the issue that the person brings, rather than because of age or gender.

# JACINDA ARDERN

## COMPASSIONATE LEADERSHIP IN FACING CRISES

BY MONICA YUSUF

Jacinda Ardern became the 40th Prime Minister of New Zealand at 37, making her the first youngest female PM in the country and in fact one of few young serving state leaders. She has been the PM since 2017, facing multiple crisis from Christchurch mosque shootings in March 2019, which later triggered a law that bans semiautomatic weapons and assault rifles in NZ, Whakaari/White Island eruption that caused 22 fatalities, to, of course, the pandemic of Covid-19, in which she set up an early lockdown policy to avoid the spread of the virus. She is known not only for her excellent leadership, but also for her compassionate style.

Ardern has always been keeping gender equality on top of her list. This goes hand in hand with another pillar of her other working agenda such eradication of child poverty. Furthermore, she also has been vocal about her focus in climate change issue. In 2018, she set out a plan to ban single-use plastic bag throughout the country with fines of NZ\$100,000 for retailers who violate the law.

Ardern and her partner, Clarke Gayford, welcomed their first child, Neve Te Aroha, in June 2018. She returned to her work after taking six week of maternity leave from work, citing that she was



Photograph by Jorge Silva / Reuters

“lucky” and “privileged” to be able to do this. Three months later, Ardern later took Neve with her to attend the United Nations General Assembly in New York, making her the first female state leader who brings her infant to such a meeting.

**“I AM NOT THE  
FIRST WOMAN TO  
WORK AND HAVE A  
BABY – THERE ARE  
MANY WOMEN WHO  
HAVE DONE THIS  
BEFORE.”**

**- ARDERN IN AN INTERVIEW ON  
RADIO NEW ZEALAND**

# HALIMAH YACOB

## TALKING ABOUT DIVERSITY FOR RECOVERY POST PANDEMIC OF COVID-19

BY MONICA YUSUF

Halimah Yacob, the current and first female president of Singapore spoke in the Women's Forum Global Meeting on 17 November 2020. Halimah opened her speech by highlighting the gap of daily house work handled between men and women in Asia Pacific, in which the latter contribute 4-11 times more. She quoted the UN Women Asia and the Pacific's study that mentions that the gap could count at least US\$10.8 trillion a year of the global economy.

Halimah also discussed about the how Covid-19 has significantly affected the global economy and how women can play a significant role for a resilient, sustainable, inclusive recovery in the post Covid-19 world. She later broke down areas targeted and implemented by Singapore under her leadership and their relation to diversity and women empowerment. The first strategy that she mentioned was by accelerating women's participation through industry 4.0. "We need to move away from the mindset that

females do not prefer STEM subjects in school and do not do well in related jobs."

The second strategy was by allowing workers to upgrade and acquire new skills which she highlighted can be the opportunity for women to level their playing fields. Last but not least was strengthening the diversity and partnership that includes co-operation between private and public services and from across different talent pools. Halimah used this opportunity to also discuss about the recently-launched Conversations of Singapore Women Development, a platform that will enhance the opportunity for women to raise the issue of diversity and women empowerment.

Halimah's involvement in this forum marked her continuous support towards gender equality and women leadership. She has previously joined other panels such as Women's Forum Asia and Women's Forum Singapore in previous years.

Photograph by Nuria Ling / TODAY



# **UPCOMING WIL EVENTS AND EXTERNAL EVENTS**

**DECEMBER - 07**

**She Covery  
Conference**

**DECEMBER - 15**


**Amazon Panel  
discussion**

**JANUARY - 15**

**APAC/Consulting/WIL  
Networking Event**

**FEBRUARY - 11**

**Women in business  
event with Bocconi**



**"IF WE TOOK AWAY  
BARRIERS TO  
WOMEN'S  
LEADERSHIP, WE  
WOULD SOLVE THE  
CLIMATE CHANGE  
PROBLEM A LOT  
FASTER"**

**MARY ROBINSON - FORMER PRESIDENT OF IRELAND**



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**"WITH AGE YOU BECOME MORE CONFIDENT, YOU LEARN TO STEP INTO YOUR SKIN AND OWN YOUR SPACE. IT TOOK ME LONG TIME INTO MY SIXTIES BEFORE I COULD REALLY OWN MYSELF FULLY. AND SHOULD BE A GOOD THINK FOR PEOPLE WHO ARE WATCHING THIS, YOU KNOW IS NEVER TOO LATE, DON'T GIVE UP. DON'T SETTLE OR GIVE UP TOO SOON BECAUSE IF YOU KEEP WORKING AT IT YOU CAN BECOME WHO YOU WERE MEANT TO BE LATER IN LIFE..."**

**WOMEN ARE MUCH LESS VULNERABLE TO THE DISEASE OF INDIVIDUALISM. WE UNDERSTAND INTERDEPENDENCE, WE TEND TO LIKE BEING IN COMMUNITY, I MEAN, LOOK AT BOOK CLUBS AND QUILTING BEES AND SEWING BEES AND ALL THE WAY BACK TO THE TIMES OF HUNTER-GATHERERS. WOMEN FIND THEIR STRENGTH- THEIR SUPERPOWER- TOGETHER. THAT'S WHY I THINK WOMEN ARE LEADING THE CLIMATE MOVEMENT AGAINST THE CLIMATE CHANGE CRISIS"**

**Jane Fonda**



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